

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 105**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 3, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JON M. BRAMNICK

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

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District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Space and Thomson

SYNOPSIS

Establishes four joint legislative strategic planning committees to recommend proposals that offer long-term solutions to major issues facing this State.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/24/2020)

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** supplementing the Joint Rules of the
 2 Senate and the General Assembly to establish four joint
 3 legislative strategic planning committees to make
 4 recommendations to both Houses of the Legislature regarding
 5 proposals that offer long-term solutions to major issues facing
 6 this State.

7
 8 **WHEREAS**, Due to factors that have developed over many years, this
 9 State is facing significant challenges concerning the funding of
 10 public employee benefits, the effects of State tax policies, the cost,
 11 fairness, and effectiveness of education funding, and
 12 competitiveness with other states in creating jobs by attracting and
 13 retaining business in New Jersey; and

14 **WHEREAS**, These challenges result, in full or in part, from a lack of
 15 legislative long-term planning and failure to consider individual
 16 policies and legislative acts in the context of strategic goals for the
 17 betterment of the State; and

18 **WHEREAS**, It is the responsibility of the Legislature to address these
 19 challenges through the development of sound long-term policies;
 20 and

21 **WHEREAS**, The Legislature's standard practices tend to favor a largely
 22 piecemeal approach to policymaking, and the political atmosphere
 23 often creates difficulties in reaching compromise and developing
 24 long-term solutions to complex problems; and

25 **WHEREAS**, There is a need, therefore, for the Legislature to create four
 26 joint legislative strategic planning committees to study these
 27 challenges, examine the long-term outlook for New Jersey in each
 28 such area, and make recommendations for legislation or other
 29 policy changes designed to provide relief for taxpayers and improve
 30 the long-term prospects for New Jersey's attractiveness and
 31 affordability as a place for individuals, families and businesses to
 32 remain or relocate to; now, therefore,

33
 34 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
 35 Jersey (the Senate concurring):

36
 37 The following Joint Rules are adopted:

38
 39 1. There are created four joint legislative strategic planning
 40 committees. Each committee shall consist of nine members: two
 41 members of the Senate appointed by the President thereof; two
 42 members of the Senate appointed by the Minority Leader thereof,
 43 two members of the General Assembly appointed by the Speaker
 44 thereof; two members of the General Assembly appointed by the
 45 Minority Leader thereof; and one member who shall be a former
 46 Governor of this State appointed jointly by the President and the
 47 Speaker. Only a former Governor who was elected to that office
 48 shall be eligible for appointment to a committee pursuant to this

1 section. Of the former Governors appointed to the four committees,
2 not more than two shall be of the same political party. If a former
3 Governor is unavailable for an appointment, a committee shall
4 consist of the eight appointed legislative members. Legislative
5 members shall be of the same political party as the presiding officer
6 or leader making the appointment. A member may be removed
7 from a committee for cause by the appointing officer, except that if
8 any member is so removed, the appointing officer shall forthwith
9 appoint another member in the same manner that the original
10 appointment was made. The President and the Speaker shall each
11 designate one appointee to a committee as co-chairperson of that
12 committee. The co-chairs shall be members of different political
13 parties.

14

15 2. Each committee shall meet at the call of its co-chairpersons.
16 The committees may review the functions, duties, operations and
17 programs of agencies of the State and its political subdivisions
18 relevant to the areas of review as set forth herein, as well as the
19 relevant governing statutes, regulations, ordinances, resolutions,
20 policies, and orders. As part of that review, the committees may
21 examine pending and proposed bills and resolutions, as well as
22 relevant reports and testimony. In addition, each committee shall
23 endeavor to invite non-partisan experts in fields related to the
24 committee's subject areas to testify before the committee and to
25 provide other appropriate assistance to the committee. Each
26 committee shall prepare reports of its deliberations and
27 recommendations at such intervals as the committee determines to
28 be appropriate, but not less often than annually unless an extension
29 is approved jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker
30 of the General Assembly. Each report shall be transmitted to the
31 Senate and the General Assembly and shall include, but not be
32 limited to, any proposals that the committee may wish to
33 recommend for constitutional amendments or legislation to bring
34 about reform.

35

36 3. There is created the Joint Legislative Strategic Planning
37 Committee on Public Employee Benefits. It shall be the duty of the
38 committee to examine ways to lower costs to taxpayers, preserve
39 the goal of attracting and retaining qualified employees, and
40 provide a level of benefits to complement salary that provides an
41 appropriate compensation package in light of national trends in the
42 public and private sectors.

43 The committee shall specifically examine the following:

44 the existing unfunded liability of the State-administered
45 retirement systems and the projected cost of the State's employer
46 contributions in dollars and as a percentage of projected State
47 revenue over the next 30 years;

1 the cost to public employers of providing health care benefits to
2 employees and retirees;
3 a comparison of public pension and health benefits in New
4 Jersey to those of large private-sector New Jersey employers,
5 including the cost of the benefits and the relative share of the costs
6 borne by the employee and employer;
7 the benefits and disadvantages of transitioning from a defined
8 benefit system to a defined contribution system, with
9 recommendations for the option deemed best for balancing cost, the
10 employee's ability to maximize returns and minimize risk, and the
11 ability of public employers to attract and retain qualified
12 employees;
13 the options available in the selection of health benefit plans, for
14 both public employers and employees, and whether there is a
15 sufficiently varied range of choices and appropriate incentives to
16 choose lower cost plans; and
17 the findings and recommendations of the New Jersey Pension
18 and Health Benefit Study Commission established by Executive
19 Order No. 161 (Christie) of 2014.

20

21 4. There is created the Joint Legislative Strategic Planning
22 Committee on the Effects of State Tax Policy. It shall be the duty
23 of the committee to examine the revenue generated by State taxes
24 and any other perceived benefit, as compared to the economic or
25 other impact of those taxes, the fairness and affordability to the
26 taxpayer, predictability of the revenue stream for budgeting
27 purposes, and the relative efficiency of methods of collecting
28 revenue through each particular tax.

29 The committee shall specifically examine the following:

30 the effect of the Sales and Use Tax, Gross Income Tax,
31 Corporation Business Tax, estate tax, inheritance tax, and realty
32 transfer fee on individuals and small businesses, particularly on
33 decisions to move out of New Jersey and to close businesses;

34 ways to reduce the overall burden on taxpayers; and

35 possible ways to reform the tax system to minimize compliance
36 costs and inefficiency in the collection process.

37

38 5. There is created the Joint Legislative Strategic Planning
39 Committee on Public Education Funding and Reform. It shall be
40 the duty of the committee to examine the existing school funding
41 formula and annual appropriations for education funding since the
42 adoption of that formula, the budgeting and spending practices of
43 school districts, educational outcomes and their relationship to
44 funding levels and programs, the meaning of the "thorough and
45 efficient" clause of the State Constitution, the role of the New
46 Jersey Supreme Court in determining education funding policy and
47 the impact of the court's decisions with regard to educational
48 outcomes, and the results of various education reform initiatives

1 including, but not limited to, school choice and charter schools, and
2 teacher tenure and evaluation reform.

3 The committee shall specifically examine the following:

4 the cost to the State of aid to school districts over the next 30
5 years under the current school funding formula;

6 the relationship between the current school funding formula and
7 educational outcomes;

8 a comparison of the preceding two items with the experiences of
9 others states;

10 options for changes to the system of education funding in this
11 State, including possible changes that may necessitate amending the
12 State Constitution, in order to provide a more thorough and efficient
13 funding system that will result in greater fairness in the allocation
14 of aid and less inequality between the recipients of higher and lower
15 amounts of aid per pupil, and make funding related to educational
16 outcomes; and

17 programs, policies, and approaches that are not necessarily
18 related to funding but which may improve educational outcomes.

19

20 6. There is created the Joint Legislative Strategic Planning
21 Committee on Jobs and Economic Development. It shall be the
22 duty of the committee to examine all factors contributing to the
23 State's attractiveness as a place in which to establish, maintain and
24 expand a business, with specific attention to differing needs of
25 small businesses and larger ones.

26 The committee shall specifically examine the following:

27 incentive programs currently offered by the State;

28 the marketing and promotion of incentive programs and other
29 benefits of locating or expanding commercial operations in the
30 State;

31 taxes on businesses including, but not limited to, the corporation
32 business tax and the gross income tax;

33 other taxes that may impact economic competitiveness with other
34 states, including, but not limited to, the sales and use tax, excise
35 taxes and property taxes; and

36 other State policies with a substantial direct or indirect impact on
37 businesses, including but not limited to administrative regulations,
38 permitting processes, energy policy, and education and workforce
39 training.

40

41 7. Each joint legislative strategic planning committee shall
42 organize as soon as possible after the appointment of its members.

43

44 8. Five members of a joint legislative strategic planning
45 committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any
46 business. Official committee action shall be by a majority vote of
47 the members serving on the committee.

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9. The joint legislative strategic planning committees shall be entitled to call to their assistance and avail themselves of the services of such employees of any State, county or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, agency or authority as they may deem necessary or desirable, and as may be available for their purposes.

8 10. Any member or members of a joint legislative strategic
9 planning committee who do not concur with the report of the
10 committee may issue a minority statement that shall be included in
11 the transmitted report of the committee.

11. All public meetings shall be recorded and transcribed, and, when feasible, audio and video of public meetings shall be made available on the State Legislature's website. All meetings at which official committee action is taken shall be open to the public. The chairpersons of a joint legislative strategic planning committee shall notify the Office of Legislative Services, for posting and distribution to the public, of the time, place, and agenda of each meeting of the committee. The notice shall be distributed to the public at least five calendar days prior to the meeting, except that the presiding officers, acting jointly, may waive the five-day notice requirement, provided that in no case shall less than 48 hours notice of a meeting be given.

12. To the extent that the jurisdiction or recommendations of joint committees may overlap or conflict, the co-chairpersons of those committees shall consult with each other to coordinate and resolve differences.

31 13. This concurrent resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

36 This concurrent resolution would establish four joint legislative
37 committees to review and formulate proposals that address major
38 long-term issues facing this State. The committees are the Joint
39 Legislative Strategic Planning Committee on Public Employee
40 Benefits, Joint Legislative Strategic Planning Committee on the
41 Effects of State Tax Policy, Joint Legislative Strategic Planning
42 Committee on Public Education Funding and Reform, and Joint
43 Legislative Strategic Planning Committee on Jobs and Economic
44 Development. The committees will review and formulate proposals
45 within their respective subject areas as set forth in this resolution,
46 and make recommendations to both Houses of the Legislature.

Due to factors that have developed over many years, this State is facing significant challenges in these areas. The Legislature's

1 standard practices tend to favor a largely piecemeal approach to
2 policymaking, and the political atmosphere often creates difficulties
3 in reaching compromise and developing long-term solutions to
4 complex problems. These committees will provide a specific venue
5 for the Legislature to examine the long-term outlook for New Jersey
6 in each area, and make recommendations for legislation or other
7 policy changes designed to provide relief for taxpayers and improve
8 the long-term prospects for New Jersey's attractiveness and
9 affordability as a place for individuals, families and businesses to
10 remain or relocate to.